

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTO 07016

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.)

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN

1. SUMMARY: MOST OF THE SECRETARY'S JUNE 23
CONVERSATION WITH OWEN WAS DEVOTED TO NEXT STEPS
IN RHODESIA. OWEN OUTLINED HIS THINKING ON HOW
TO HANDLE THE NEW CONSTITUTION, PAYMENT OF OUTSTANDING
PENSION FUNDS, AND THE LAW AND ORDER ISSUE. ALTHOUGH
HE DOES NOT HAVE HMG APPROVAL FOR THE IDEA, OWEN ASKED
WHETHER THE US COULD GIVE SOME FORMS OF SUPPORT FOR
A 2000-MAN COMMONWEALTH FORCE TO BE STATIONED IN
ZIMBABWE FOR THE 3 TO 6 MONTH TRANSITION PERIOD.
THE SECRETARY UNDERTOOK TO GET A PRELIMINARY UNITED
STATES GOVERNMENT REACTION TO THE OWEN IDEA AND REPORT
BACK TO THE FOREIGN SECRETARY NEXT WEEK. END SUMMARY.
2. THE SECRETARY BEGAN THE CONVERSATION BY TELLING
OWEN THAT HE WAS CONCERNED WITH MOVING AHEAD QUICKLY
ON RHODESIA . HOWEVER, THE NECESSARY PAPERS AND
PREPARATIONS HAD TO BE DONE IN ADVANCE. IT WOULD BE
HZLPFUL FOR THE BRITISH AND AMERICANS TO SIT DOWN
TOGETHER BEFORE OWEN RETURNED TO SOUTHERN AFRICA,

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AND THE SECRETARY WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO PARTICIPATE
AT SCH A REVPEW AT ANYHTIME. OWEN SAID THAT SINCE
NO BRITISH PARLIAMENT COULD REACH SUCH AN IMPORTANT
DECISION AS THAT ON RHODESIAN POLICY IN THE MONTH OF
AUGUST, THE CRITICAL CHOICES WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE BEFORE-
HAND.

3. OWEN THEN REVIEWED THE ELEMENTS OF THE PACKAGE THAT

HE IS NOW PREPARING:

A. THE CONSTITUTION. UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE IS TO BE DECLARED. OWEN HOPES THAT THE NATIONALISTS WOULD AGREE TO APPOINT 10 WHITE AND 10 BLACK MEMBERS TO THE LEGISLATURE IN ORDER TO ASSURE A RACIAL AND TRIBAL BALANCE IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT. HOWEVER, HE DID NOT INSIST THAT THIS PROVISION BE MADE.

B. PENSION FUNDS. OWEN PREDICTED THAT THE PAYMENT OF PENSION RIGHTS ACCORDED UNDER THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT WOULD PRESENT A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE. FOR POLITICAL REASONS, THE NATIONALISTS DO NOT WANT TO GUARANTEE THESE PAYMENTS. HOWEVER, SUCH A GUARANTEE APPEARS ESSENTIAL IF THE WHITE POPULATION OF RHODESIA IS TO BE REASSURED ABOUT ITS FUTURE. OWEN ADVANCED THE IDEA OF HAVING THE ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND (ZDF) BE USED AS LEVERAGE ON THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE PAYMENT OF THE PENSIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE TRUSTEES OF THE ZDF WOULD BE ALLOWED TO FREEZE DISBURSEMENTS UNLESS ALL THE PROVISION OF THE COUNTRY'S CONSTITUTION (INCLUDING PENSION PAYMENTS) WERE TO BE HONORED. THE NATIONALISTS MIGHT CHALLENGE PAYMENT OF PENSIONS TO SOME OF THE WHITE LEADERS, BUT WOULD HAVE NO MORAL GROUNDS FOR REFUSING TO PAY MOST OF THEM. AMBASSADOR LOW ADDED AT THIS POINT THAT THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS WOULD LIKELY SUPPORT THE GUARANTEE SINCE THEIR COUNTRIES HAD ALL ASSUMED
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SIMILAR OBLIGATIONS UPON INDEPENDENCE.

C. LAW AND ORDER. OWEN DESCRIBED THE NEED TO PRESERVE LAW AND ORDER AS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO SATISFY MODERATE WHITE OPINION IN RHODESIA AND "FUNNEL IT OFF FROM IAN SMITH." THESE WHITES VIEW LAW AND ORDER AS A NECESSARY CONDITION TO ANY FAIR ELECTIONS. DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD, THE GUERRILLAS MUST BE CONVINCED TO RESPECT THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. OWEN THEN ADDED THAT A COMMONWEALTH FORCE COMPOSED OF ROUGHLY THREE BATTALIONS OF 600 TO 700 MEN EACH WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE STATIONED IN ZIMBABWE FOR THE 3 TO 6 MONTH TRANSITION PERIOD. IT WOULD BE PLACED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE BRITISH INTERNAL COMMISSIONER AND WOULD HAVE THE PRIMARY JOB OF OVERSEEING FREE ELECTIONS. BLACK SOLDIERS PRESENTLY IN BOTH THE NATIONALIST FORCES, AS WELL AS IN THE RHODESIAN ARMY, WOULD BE INVITED TO SIGN UP WITH A NEW ZIMBABWE DEFENSE FORCE THAT WOULD BE PUT TOGETHER UNDER THE INITIAL LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMONWEALTH FORCE. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WOULD HAVE TO HAVE A PRIMARY PART IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF

AN EVENTUAL ZIMBAWBE DEFENSE FORCE. MOST OF THE WHITE OFFICERS OF THE PRESENT RHODESIAN FORCE WOULD HAVE TO BE REMOVED AND BRITISH, NIGERIAN, KENYAN AND OTHER COMMONWEALTH OFFICERS COULD STAY ON AFTER INDEPENDENCE TO TRAIN THE COUNTRY'S NEW MILITARY ORGANIZATION.

4. OWEN THEN SUGGESTED THAT THE COMMONWEALTH FORCE MIGHT BE MADE UP OF ONE GHURKA, ONE UK, AND ONE COMMONWEALTH BATTALION. HE HOPED THAT THE NIGERIANS WOULD PARTICIPATE AND ADDED THAT THE GHANAIANS WOULD BE INTERESTED BUT CANNOT PAY, THE KENYANS HAVE THEIR OWN SECURITY PROBLEMS, AND THAT THE INDIANS MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE BROUGHT IN. THE CANADIANS AND AUSTRALIANS ARE ADOPTING A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE. HOPEFULLY THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS WOULD AGREE TO TRY TO CALM FEARS THAT GUERRILLA
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WARFARE WILL CONTINUE DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD.

5. STRESSING THAT HIS PROPOSAL HAD NOT RECEIVED HMG SUPPORT. OWEN ASKED THE SECRETARY FOR HIS PERSONAL REACTION CONCERNING THE DEGREE OF "PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT" THAT SUCH AN OPERATION COULD RECEIVE FROM THE US. IF GHANA NEEDED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OR THE PARTICIPATING FORCES NEEDED TRANSPORTATION OR LOGISTICAL SUPPORT, WHAT WOULD THE US DO?

6. THE SECRETARY ANSWERED THAT THERE WERE PRECEDENTS FOR LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AND AIR TRANSPORTATION BEING PROVIDED BY THE US FOR PEACEKEEPING FORCES. UPON HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON HE WOULD UNDERTAKE TO LOOK INTO THE QUESTION IMMEDIATELY AND ALSO SEE HOW THE FUNDING OF SUCH SUPPORT COULD BE ARRANGED. THE SECRETARY SAID THAT HE COULD MAKE NO PROMISE OF ASSISTANCE, BUT WOULD NOT RULE THESE OUT, AND WOULD GET A PRELIMINARY ANSWER BACK TO OWEN BY JULY 1, WHEN THE FOREIGN SECRETARY WOULD BE DISCUSSING THE PROJECT WITH SOME OF HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES.

7. SENATOR RIBICOFF ADDED HIS INITIAL REACTION THAT THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN PACKAGE, AS DESCRIBED BY OWEN, SEEMED TO BE EMINENTLY FAIR. IF THE COMMONWEALTH FORCE WAS INSTITUTED TO STOP BLOODSHED BETWEEN WHITES AND BLACKS, HE FELT THAT CONGRESS WOULD HELP CONTRIBUTE ESPECIALLY IF THE PRESIDENT BROUGHT THE DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP TOGETHER IN A JOINT SESSION TO PERSUADE THEM OF THE MERITS OF THE IDEA. HE ADDED THAT US ASSISTANCE FOR PROTECTING WHITE LIVES AND PENSION RIGHTS WOULD BE VIEWED SYMPATHETICALLY BY MANY OF THE SOUTHERN CONGRESSMEN WHO HAD OPPOSED
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ASSISTANCE TO BLACK AFRICA.

8. OWEN SAID THAT HE WOULD PRESS HIS EFFORTS TO PUT TOGETHER A PACKAGE INCLUDING THE ELEMENTS MENTIONED ABOVE AS SOON AS HE RETURNED TO LONDON. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT DOES NOT WANT A PREVIOUSLY NEGOTIATED PACKAGE ON THE TABLE, BUT FAVORS THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP COMING UP WITH ITS OWN IDEAS.

9. THE HMG HAS TWO CABINET LEVEL COMMITTEES WORKING ON THE LAW AND ORDER AND PENSION QUESTIONS.

10. OWEN AND THE SECRETARY THEN DISCUSSED WHETHER TO GET A PRELIMINARY SOUTH AFRICAN REACTION TO THE OUTLINE OF THE BRITISH PACKAGE BEFORE GOING TO THE POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS IN THE ZDF AND COMMONWEALTH FORCE.

OWEN SAID THAT SUCH A CHOICE ON HOW TO PROCEED WOULD BE A DIFFICULT ONE AND HE WOULD HAVE TO REFLECT ON IT. THE SECRETARY INDICATED THAT HE WOULD DEFER TO THE BRITISH JUDGMENT ON WHO TO APPROACH FIRST. OWEN STRESSED THAT WHATEVER THE FINAL PACKAGE WAS, THIS WOULD BE THE FARTHEST THAT ANY HMG COULD GO. OWEN ASKED US TO KEEP THESE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE DETAILS OF THE PACKAGE ABSOLUTELY QUIET AND NOT ALLOW ANY US OFFICIAL TO COMMENT PUBLICLY ON THEM.

11. THE SECRETARY SAID THAT THE US WOULD BE VERY INTERESTED IN HEARING THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE US MILITARY EXPERTS ON THE FEASIBILITY AND MISSION OF THE PROPOSED COMMONWEALTH FORCE.

12. THE SECRETARY AND OWEN AGREED THAT THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP SHOULD BEGIN ITS SOUNDINGS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA BEGINNING ON JULY 6 AND THEN REPORT BACK. OWEN SAID THAT HE HAD TENTATIVELY

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PLANNED HIS TRIP FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 18, AT WHICH TIME HE WOULD SEE VORSTER, AS WELL AS MOST OF THE NATIONALISTS. BOTH THE SECRETARY AND OWEN AGREED TO BE IN CONSTANT TOUCH ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE PACKAGE FOR ZIMBABWE IN THE COMING DAYS. THE SECRETARY INVITED OWEN TO COME TO WASHINGTON TO MEET WITH HIM AFTER THE PACKAGE HAS BEEN PUT

TOGETHER BUT BEFORE OWEN VISITS SOUTHERN AFRICA.
ONCE THE SECRETARY ENDORSES THE PACKAGE, HE WOULD
SUBMIT IT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR APPROVAL. THE SECRETARY
ALSO SUGGESTED THAT HE AND OWEN MIGHT THEN HOLD JOINT
INFORMAL MEETINGS WITH THE SENATE AND HOUSE
LEADERSHIP TO CONSULT ON THE PACKAGE.
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